

QA

Smashing Silos Yields Increased Cloud Security and Better Outcomes

Improved security, IT efficiency and exceptional customer experiences can be achieved by fostering collaboration among traditionally segregated operations and security teams. This is especially true when migrating operations to the cloud. Virtustream provides unified cloud operations, application management and security services for mission-critical applications, such as Epic EHR and Payer Platform. HIMSS recently sat down with Virtustream's Nicholas Kathmann, Director of IT Security; and Rob Scott, Vice President, Services and Support, to discuss the importance and positive effects of breaking down silos.

What are some key trends that require greater collaboration between security and operations?

Scott: Customers are moving the bulk of their mission-critical workloads into the cloud. This trend is putting increased focus on the importance of security for the cloud and all of its endpoints. Recently, there have been growing concerns about ransomware among healthcare providers and protecting sensitive healthcare data.

Kathmann: A great deal of collaboration needs to happen; it goes beyond just security and operations. In cases like ransomware, it includes human resources, legal, data protection, communications, public relations, shareholders and more. There ends up being a lot of coordination, both from the cloud provider and the customer.

What is Virtustream doing to break down the silos that have traditionally existed between security and operations teams? What are some best practices?

Scott: Our security and operations experts work side by side. It's treated as one organization. Security and operations teams have their expertise; they're perfectly aligned on putting the customer first and securing the environment. Security is everyone's job.

Kathmann: When it comes to best practices, security and operations work with our customers early on and ensure that we enable security by design, so we're not just bolting it on afterward. This results in better security implementation. For customers, a lot has already been thought through and done for them. This gives them greater design flexibility.

Most healthcare companies are going to design and implement Epic only once. If there are mistakes, they have no opportunity to implement lessons learned. Virtustream has implemented Epic in the cloud for many customers, and we're constantly iterating and learning. We bring that knowledge to the next customer. For example, transparency is often overlooked. We've gone to great lengths to develop dashboards and portals that provide near-real-time visibility into what we're doing, how we're doing it and what we're seeing, so the customer can always trust but verify. There is complete transparency into back-end operations and security practices, and that provides comfort and confidence.

What are some challenges in the collaboration between security and ops teams?

Kathmann: IT operations teams and security teams typically use a different vocabulary. Developing a common language helps them collaborate. All of our security architects worked in IT operations before, many times in healthcare settings, so they came from the operations side and grew into security over time. They can speak both languages and help translate. One of the benefits is that when we come up with common priorities, security is not asked to cut back because of operational deadlines. As we're building the environment, the security requirements are understood ahead of time and are already baked in. Again, it's security by design.



Rob Scott

Vice President, Services and Support
Virtustream

Under Rob Scott's leadership, Virtustream offers a comprehensive suite of professional and managed services for customers leveraging cloud environments to migrate, modernize and manage their most business-critical applications and workloads. He is a results-obsessed leader with a passion for building successful teams and ecosystems. His career spans more than 20 years and centers on a customer-first ethos, built atop clear business strategies and supported by broad organizational alignment and operational excellence in support of high-growth, technology-focused companies like Motorola, EMC, VCE and Virtustream.



Nicholas Kathmann

Director of IT Security
Virtustream

Nicholas Kathmann has devoted most of his 20-plus years of IT experience to helping enterprises of all sizes strengthen their cybersecurity postures. He has built and led several teams delivering cybersecurity solutions for complex business-critical environments – on-premises and in the cloud. At Virtustream, Nicholas is responsible for overall security operations and the delivery of xStreamCare Services™ for Security and Compliance. He has been instrumental in architecting and improving Virtustream's Trust Platform. Before Virtustream, Nicholas was responsible for security and compliance at RSA. He has been awarded seven patents in the cybersecurity and risk space.

What are some of the benefits of this collaboration?

Kathmann: One of the biggest benefits customers experience from this collaboration is security by design, so they end up with a more resilient cloud. Having gone through this multiple times, we can better understand expectations and what needs to be done, when and where, to improve security posture.

Moreover, the cloud we provide is already HIPAA- and HITECH-compliant, ensuring that protected health information (PHI) and non-PHI information is well protected. This makes it a much smaller uplift for the customer. And with those things, we earn customer trust, bridging that gap by helping them to collaborate and work toward a solution.

Scott: Putting security first by design results in an overall more secure environment, which means we have to react less to any potential risk. More security built-in upfront means less to worry about later.

Simplified engagement, consistency and message transparency give our customers greater confidence, a better experience and more time to focus on providing care. In the past, when there was less collaboration, you might have conflicts in the message that made it back to the customer. They might hear one thing from an operations team and something different from the security team. With collaboration and breaking down silos, you're getting that consistency of engagement across the board.

When your organization needs to move its mission-critical applications to the cloud, trust Virtustream to get and keep you there safely and securely. Visit virtustream.com/healthcare-cloud-solutions to learn more.



About Virtustream

Virtustream, a Dell Technologies Business, is the enterprise-class cloud company trusted by businesses and organizations globally to transform and move their mission-critical applications to the cloud. Virtustream's Healthcare Cloud and xStreamCare Services – built on a decade of experience in cloud hosting and managing mission-critical enterprise applications – accelerate digital transformation by simplifying the implementation, migration and ongoing management of Epic and other ancillary workloads in the cloud. Our purpose-built solutions consistently meet the most demanding needs of high resiliency, availability, performance, security, compliance and scale with flexible deployment and cost models.